MYSTERIOUS

THRILLING TALES OF TERROR 10¢

# MYSTERIOUS ADVENTURES

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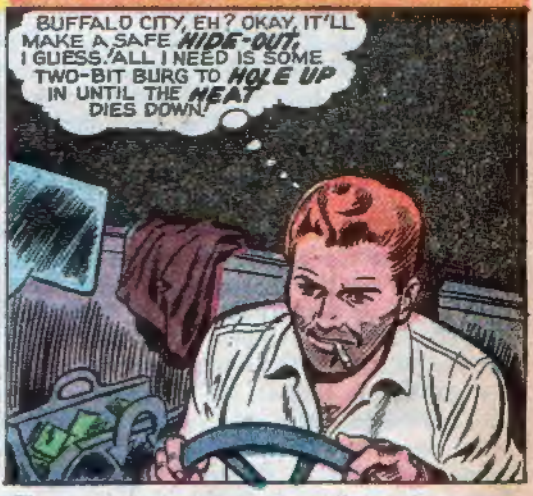
FEB. NO. 19

Supermouse
STARTLING COMICS
JETTA
MYSTERY COMICS
FANTASTIC TALES
COSMO CAT
STARTLING COMICS
STRANGE MYSTERIES
DARING ADVENTURES
STARTLING COMICS
MYSTERY Tales
EXCITING COMICS
Famous Funnies
STRANGE WORLDS
WEBCOMIC UNIVERSE.COM
JETTA
STARTLING COMICS
MYSTERY Tales
STARTLING COMICS
BARNYARD COMICS
EXCITING COMICS
EERIE
EXCITING COMICS
CASPER CAT
DARING ADVENTURES

READY FOR MORE **FEARFUL FAIRY TALES**, KIDDIE? OKAY, READ ON... THIS IS A **JUICY LITTLE MORSEL** DESIGNED **ESPECIALLY** TO **DELIGHT** LOVERS OF **BLOOD** AND **GUTS!** WE CALL IT SIMPLY...

# GHOST TOWN

I'VE JUST PASSED A SIGN THAT SAYS **"BUFFALO CITY, 12 MILES!"** THAT'S WHERE I'M HEADED. I'VE NEVER BEEN THERE BEFORE BUT WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? BUFFALO CITY SOUNDS AS GOOD AS ANYPLACE ELSE...




THREE DAYS AGO I PULLED A BANK JOB IN KANSAS. EVERYTHING WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH AND NOW ALL I NEED IS SOMEPLACE TO LIE LOW FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS...

BUT FOR THE TIME BEING, MY PLANS FOR ENJOYING THE LOOT WILL HAVE TO WAIT / SAFETY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PLEASURE AND NOW I'M IN BUFFALO CITY..

FOR PETE'S SAKE, THIS DUMP LOOKS DESERTED! WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

ALL THE STORES ARE LOCKED, THE RESTAURANTS CLOSED AND THE BARS EMPTY! I FINALLY END MY TOUR OF INSPECTION AT THE TOWN'S ONLY HOTEL..

HEY, ANYBODY HOME... ANYBODY HERE? WELL, I'LL BE DARNED... LOOKS LIKE I PICKED A REAL GHOST TOWN!

BUT THAT'S FINE WITH ME! WHY NOT? WHAT BETTER PLACE TO HOLE UP THAN IN A GHOST TOWN? I PICK THE BEST ROOM IN THE HOTEL AND GET READY FOR SOME SLEEP.

HOPE I CAN (YAWN) FIND SOME FOOD AROUND HERE AFTER I WAKE UP!

I FALL INTO A DEEP SLEEP... BUT WHEN I AWAKEN I'M NOT ALONE...

C'MON, MISTER, WAKE UP!

YOU'RE A STRANGER... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

W-WHAT... WHO?

THEY START FIRING QUESTIONS AT ME AND I BEGIN GETTING WORRIED... I WISH MY GUN WEREN'T IN MY JACKET HANGING ACROSS THE ROOM..

WHO SENT YOU HERE, MISTER

WHERE'D YOU COME FROM?

WHAT ARE YOU HERE FOR?

WAIT A SECOND! TAKE IT EASY! I CAN'T ANSWER EVERYTHING AT ONCE!

THE SIGN OVER THE HOTEL READ "HORACE BELL, PROPRIETOR!" IT WAS A WILD CHANCE BUT I TOOK IT...

HORACE BELL'S MY UNCLE! MY LAST LIVING RELATIVE! I CAME ALL THE WAY FROM NEW YORK TO FIND HIM! ARE ONE OF YOU MEN HORACE? I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM!

HORACE BELL IS DEAD! DIED A WEEK AGO!

I HOLD MY BREATH WHILE THEY STAND LOOKING DOWN AT ME... WILL THEY BELIEVE ME? WILL THEY FALL FOR IT...?

TOO BAD YOU GOT HERE TOO LATE, SON! BUT IF YOU'RE HORACE'S NEPHEW, YOU'RE ONE OF US! WELCOME!

NOW WAIT A MINUTE, SAM, YOU CAN'T BE SURE...

STOP WORRYING, LOOK AT HIM... LOOKS JUST LIKE HORACE!

AND SO THEY BELIEVE ME...THE IDIOTS... THEY EVEN HOLD A SPECIAL DINNER IN MY HONOR...
DRINK UP, CURT! IT'S THE REAL THING!
BUT AS I EAT I NOTICE SAM CURTIS WATCHING ME LIKE A HAWK...
I DON'T LIKE THE WAY HE'S LOOKING AT ME! I WONDER IF HE SUSPECTS ANYTHING! UGH, WHAT LOUSY TOMATO JUICE!
DURING DINNER I FINALLY ASK A QUESTION THAT'S BEEN BOTHERING ME ALL NIGHT...
SAY, WHERE WAS EVERYBODY THIS MORNING? YOU BOYS OUT PROSPECTING OR SOMETHING?
HAHAHAHAHA! YOU'RE A REAL CARD, CURT! JUST LIKE OLD HORACE WAS! SURE, BOY, WE WAS PROSPECTING! HAHAHA!
HIS LAUGHTER PUZZLES ME BUT I QUICKLY FORGET IT WHEN AFTER DINNER I HEAR AN ARGUMENT BETWEEN SAM CURTIS AND ANOTHER MAN...
I'M WARNING YOU, LEWIS, WE'VE MADE A MISTAKE! I WATCHED HIM ALL DURING DINNER AND I KNOW!
SAM, YOU'RE A FOOL! I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THAT BOY'S ONE OF OUR KIND! HE'S HORACE BELL'S NEPHEW!
THE MORE I LISTEN, THE MORE NERVOUS I GET... I DON'T LIKE IT... I DON'T LIKE IT ONE BIT...
WELL, IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH! WE'LL GIVE HIM A TEST AND IF HE PASSES I'LL SHUT UP!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET TO IT... I'M SICK OF HEARING THIS NONSENSE!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF A TEST THEY MEAN... BUT WHATEVER IT IS, I CAN'T PASS! I RUN UP TO MY ROOM AND GRAB THE LITTLE BLACK BAG...
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE! IF THEY'VE HEARD ABOUT THE KANSAS BANK JOB AND FIND OUT I'M NOT BELL'S NEPHEW, THEY MAY PUT TWO-AND-TWO TOGETHER!
BUT WHEN I OPEN THE DOOR TO LEAVE...
GOING SOMEWHERE, CURT?
NO...ER, NO! I JUST WANTED TO... ER... UNPACK SOME CLOTHES!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, BOY! HATE TO BOTHER YOU, BUT SAM HERE HAS GOT A CRAZY NOTION... AND WE WANT TO SHOW HIM HE'S WRONG!
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AND SO I'M TRAPPED! MENTALLY I START KISSING THE 50 G'S GOODBYE AND PREPARING FOR A 20 YEAR STRETCH IN THE PEN! WHAT LOUSY LUCK!
OKAY, WHAT IS IT? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?
IT AIN'T NOTHING YOU CAN TELL US, CURT... IT'S SOMETHING YOU CAN SHOW US!
BRING IT IN, BOYS!
A MIRROR? WHAT THE NECK IS ALL THIS ABOUT? WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO SHOW YOU?
STOP TALKING SO MUCH, BOY, AND GET UP! WALK IN FRONT OF THAT MIRROR!
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THEY'RE ALL WACKY BUT I DO WHAT HE TELLS ME...
OKAY, YOU SATISFIED? I'M IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR! NOW, WHAT'S ALL THE... HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHY... WHY DON'T...
SEE, SEE, YOU FOOLS! I WAS RIGHT! HE'S NOT HORACE'S NEPHEW! HE'S NOT ONE OF US!
MY VOICE CATCHES IN MY THROAT! SOMETHING IS WRONG... HORRIBLY WRONG! I AM THE ONLY ONE IN THE ROOM WHO IS REFLECTED IN THE MIRROR!
W-WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE... WHAT ARE YOU?
I KNEW I WAS RIGHT! I WATCHED HIM EAT... AND HE DIDN'T LIKE HIS BLOOD COCKTAIL... HARDLY TASTED FRIED BRAINS! HE DIDN'T EVEN LIKE THE BLOOD CLOT ICE CREAM!
AND NOW EVERYTHING MAKES SENSE... HORRIBLE TERRIFYING SENSE! NOW I KNOW WHY ONLY MY REFLECTION SHOWED IN THE MIRROR, WHY THE TOWN WAS DESERTED DURING THE DAY!
YOU'RE... YOU'RE VAMPIRES!
YES, YOUNG MAN, YOU'RE RIGHT AND YOU'LL DIE FOR YOUR KNOWLEDGE!
THEY MOVE SLOWLY TOWARD ME AND I BACK AWAY... BUT THERE'S NO PLACE TO RUN... NOWHERE TO HIDE...
HERE... TAKE THIS! $50,000... YOU CAN HAVE IT... ALL OF IT! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!
IDIOT! WHAT DO WE WANT WITH MONEY? NO BOY, WE'D RATHER HAVE YOU!
THEY'RE CRAWLING ALL OVER ME NOW... IT'S TOO LATE FOR HELP! TOO LATE FOR ANYTHING BUT DEATH! I CAN FEEL THE BLOOD BEING DRAINED FROM MY BODY...
HE'S NICE AND FRESH, BOYS!
YEAH, MUCH BETTER THAN THAT FROZEN STUFF!
THE END

WELCOME, *GHOUL LOVERS!* YOUR OLD FIEND, *THE CORPSE*, BRINGS YOU ANOTHER *SICKENING SAGA* TO *DELIGHT* YOUR *TERRORIFIC* APPETITES! THIS ONE SHOULD KEEP YOU *DANGLING* WITH *JOY*: A *NAUSEATING* NARRATIVE I CALL...

# STRING 'EM UP!

OUR STORY OPENS IN A SMALL PARK IN BERLIN, GERMANY, IN THE EARLY 30'S BEFORE THE RISE OF HITLER. PLAYING TO A LAUGHING APPRECIATIVE CROWD IS FRITZ KURTZ, PUPPETEER...

THE 55-YEAR-OLD CRAFTSMAN COMES FROM BEHIND THE STAGE TO ACCEPT THE CROWD'S APPLAUSE... FRITZ KURTZ HAS A HEART AS BIG AS HIMSELF. CHILDREN AND ADULTS ADORE HIM AND HE RETURNS THEIR AFFECTION...

THE CROWD DEPARTS AND THE AGING PUPPETEER GATHERS HIS PRECIOUS EQUIPMENT TOGETHER. TO FRITZ HIS PUPPETS ARE LIKE CHILDREN. HE HAS CARVED EACH ONE INDIVIDUALLY, MADE THEIR CLOTHES AND EVEN GIVEN THEM NAMES...
AH, IT WAS A GOOD NIGHT, EH, LITTLE JOCKO?
FRITZ IS A LONELY MAN... HE HAS NO WIFE, NO FAMILY. THE PUPPETS ARE HIS ONLY COMPANIONS...
-SO, MY SWEET EILEEN, YOUR NOSE NEEDS A LITTLE PAINT? TOMORROW OLD FRITZ WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU!
A SHORT TIME LATER THE PUPPETEER MAKES HIS WAY ALONG THE EMPTY BERLIN STREETS TOWARD HIS DRAB ROOM...
I MUST SEE ABOUT NEW COSTUMES FOR... T-THAT GIRL! SHE'S GOING TO JUMP!
WAIT! YOUNG WOMAN, WAIT/DON'T DO THAT!
FRITZ DROPS HIS SUITCASE AND RUNS TO WHERE THE GIRL STANDS... BUT SHE DOES NOT WISH HIS HELP. INSTEAD, SHE TRYS TO FIGHT HIM OFF...
NO! LET ME GO! I DON'T WANT TO LIVE! I WANT TO DIE!
BUT THIS IS WRONG! ANYONE SO PRETTY SHOULD WISH TO LIVE FOREVER!
FRITZ SPEAKS CALMLY AND GENTLY TO HER... AND THEN LEADS HER TO HIS ROOM WHERE HE MAKES COFFEE...
IT IS A HUMBLE ROOM AND YET IT IS HOME!
YOU'RE LUCKY! I HAVE NO HOME... I LIVE IN ALLEYS, SLEEP IN DOORWAYS!
FRITZ LISTENS AS SHE POURS OUT HER TALE OF WOE ...NO MONEY, NO FAMILY, NO FUTURE! HER NAME IS FRIEDA HAAS, SHE IS 20...
NOW TELL ME WHY I SHOULD WANT TO LIVE FOREVER! WHAT FOR? FOR THIS KIND OF LIFE?
BUT YOU MUST NOT DESPAIR! YOU ARE BUT A BABY! LIFE WILL CHANGE FOR YOU!
HE INSISTS THAT FRIEDA STAY WITH HIM UNTIL SHE CAN FIND WORK... AND AS HE GOES TO SLEEP ON THE FLOOR FRITZ KURTZ IS A HAPPY MAN! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS HE DOES NOT FEEL LONELY...
SLEEP WELL, LITTLE FRIEDA!
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THE DAYS PASS INTO WEEKS AND WITH EACH DAY FRITZ GROWS TO LOVE HIS LITTLE FRIEDA MORE... HUMBLY, HIS VOICE SHAKING WITH EMOTION, HE ASKS HER TO MARRY HIM...

I-I KNOW I AM AN OLD MAN, FRIEDA... BUT YOU *NEED* ME! LET ME TAKE *CARE* OF YOU! ALLOW ME TO *LOVE* YOU!

YES, FRITZ, I'LL MARRY YOU! YOU ARE A *KIND* MAN ...THAT IS ENOUGH FOR ME!

AND SO THEY ARE MARRIED AND FOR A YEAR FRITZ MOVES ON WINGS OF ECSTASY ...HE WORKS LONG AND HARD AND WITH FRIEDA'S HELP, THE PUPPET SHOW EARNS GOOD MONEY!

SEE, MY JOCKO, FRITZ HAS BROUGHT YOU A *MOTHER*... AND YOUR MOTHER HAS BROUGHT US *SUCCESS!*

FRITZ, YOU SWEET OLD *IDIOT!* IMAGINE BEING A MOTHER TO *PUPPETS!*

AS THE SHOW CONTINUES TO DO A FLOURISHING BUSINESS FRITZ SPENDS EVERY SPARE DIME ON FRIEDA... HE TAKES HER TO EXPENSIVE CAFES, BUYS HER EXTRAVAGANT CLOTHES...

OH FRITZ, IT'S *BEAUTIFUL!*

*NOTHING* IS BEAUTIFUL ENOUGH FOR YOU!

BUT THEIR GOOD FORTUNE DOES NOT LAST... THREE WEEKS LATER AS FRITZ IS MANIPULATING THE STRINGS DURING A LATE SHOW...

FRITZ, YOU'RE NOT *MOVING* JOCKO'S LEG! HE... *FRITZ, WHAT'S WRONG?*

M-MY HEART... FREIDA, *MY HEART...*

A DOCTOR IS SUMMONED AND WHEN FRITZ HAS BEEN PUT TO BED, FRIEDA HEARS THE DREADED NEWS...

H-HE CAN *NEVER* WORK AGAIN!

THAT'S RIGHT, MRS. KURTZ! *NEVER!* OVER-WORK IS WHAT CAUSED HIS CONDITION! THE THE *SLIGHTEST* STRAIN OR SHOCK COULD *KILL* HIM!

AFTER THE DOCTOR LEAVES FRITZ CALLS FRIEDA TO HIM AND GENTLY REASSURES HER...

DO NOT *WORRY*, MY LITTLE ONE. WE WILL HIRE A *PUPPETEER* TO WORK FOR US! TOGETHER YOU AND HE WILL RUN THE SHOW AND I SHALL KEEP THE PUPPETS IN REPAIR! EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT!

AND SO IT IS THAT HANS LERNER, NOVICE PUPPETEER, ENTERS THE LIVES OF FRITZ AND FRIEDA ...HANS IS A BIG MAN, AN ATTRACTIVE MAN, AND AS THE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE, HIS EYES ROVE APPRECIATIVELY OVER FREIDA...

...AND YOU CAN COME TO WORK *IMMEDIATELY?*

YES, MRS. KURTZ, FOR *YOU* I CAN COME *IMMEDIATELY!*

AND YOU MUST TAKE GOOD CARE OF MY PUPPETS! THEY ARE LIKE CHILDREN TO ME!
DO NOT FEAR, HERR KURTZ, I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF EVERYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOU!
HANS INTEREST IN THE VOLUPTUOUS FRIEDA IS BY NO MEANS ONE-SIDED... THAT NIGHT AS THEY PREPARE TO WORK, FRIEDA MAKES IT CLEAR THAT SHE FINDS THE TALL MUSCULAR MAN MUCH TO HER LIKING...
PERHAPS WE CAN HAVE DINNER TOGETHER AFTER THE SHOW, HANS? THERE ARE THINGS WE SHOULD DISCUSS!
YES... MANY THINGS!
AND SO ON THEIR FIRST NIGHT AS PARTNERS, HANS AND FRIEDA EXCHANGE THEIR FIRST KISS...
THE MINUTE I LAID EYES ON YOU I KNEW YOU WERE MY KIND, BABY!
FORGOTTEN IN AN INSTANT IS FRITZ AND HIS GREAT LOVE...FRIEDA IS TOO DEEPLY ATTRACTED TO HANS TO REMEMBER ANYTHING BUT HER OWN SELFISH PLEASURES...
I KNEW YOU COULDN'T BE IN LOVE WITH THE OLD FOOL!
IN LOVE WITH HIM? UGH! HE MAKES ME SICK!
THE WEEKS PASS QUICKLY AND OLD FRITZ FINDS HIMSELF LEFT ALONE MORE AND MORE...
AH, SO YOU'RE LONESOME TOO, EILEEN? YES, IT IS LONELY WITHOUT FRIEDA TO TAKE CARE OF US!
BUT FRIEDA IS INTERESTED IN NO ONE BUT FRIEDA...AND HANS!
QUICK, DARLING KISS ME BEFORE THE CROWD GETS HERE! OH, HANS, I MISS YOU SO AT NIGHT WHEN I HAVE TO GO TO HIM!
HIM... HIM! I'M TIRED OF HIM, STUPID OLD MAN AND HIS SILLY PUPPETS! I WISH HE WERE DEAD!
AND SUDDENLY BOTH HANS AND FRIEDA ARE QUIET...THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER FOR A MOMENT, EACH INTENT ON BUT ONE THOUGHT...
HANS, WE... WE COULD...
YES, WE COULD... AND WILL! LISTEN TO ME, FRIEDA...I THINK I HAVE A PLAN!

AND SO NOT ONLY DOES FRIEDA CHEAT ON FRITZ, BUT NOW SHE HELPS PLAN HIS DEATH. . .HIS *MURDER*...

...AND REMEMBER WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID: THE *SLIGHTEST* SHOCK COULD *KILL* HIM! WELL, *WE'RE* GOING TO GIVE HIM A SHOCK...AND IT *WON'T* BE SLIGHT! WE'RE GOING TO TELL HIM THE *TRUTH!*

HANS AND FRIEDA LAY THEIR PLAN CAREFULLY AND ON THE FOLLOWING DAY WHEN FRITZ AWAKENS FROM HIS AFTERNOON NAP....

(YAWN) FRIEDA HONEY, WHERE... *FRIEDA! HANS!* M—MY *GOD!* I—I MUST STILL BE FAST ASLEEP.. STILL *DREAMING!*

NO, *STUPID* YOU'RE *NOT* DREAMING! THIS IS *REAL!* YOU'VE BEEN PLAYED FOR A *SUCKER! FRIEDA DOESN'T LOVE YOU...SHE NEVER LOVED YOU!*

D-DON'T LET HIM TALK LIKE THAT, FRIEDA! HE—HE'S LYING! TELL ME HE'S LYING!

HE'S *NOT* LYING! I'VE *NEVER* LOVED YOU...YOU WERE A *MEAL TICKET*, THAT'S ALL! *A FAT REPULSIVE OLD MEAL TICKET!*

TEARS FILL THE OLD MAN'S EYES AND A SEARING PAIN SHOOTS ACROSS HIS CHEST...FRIEDA, HIS BELOVED FRIEDA HATES HIM..DESPISES HIM..THE PAIN GROWS STRONGER, MORE INTENSE .. HIS CHEST FEELS LIKE IT'S CAUGHT IN A VISE...

F—FRIEDA, (GASP) M—MY HEART... *YOU'RE KILLING ME!*

*GOOD!* THAT'S *FINE*, FRITZ! AND JUST FOR A *FINAL* TOUCH, WATCH ME *KISS* YOUR WIFE!

FRITZ FALLS BACKWARD GASPING...HE'S DYING...

AND *THIS* IS WHAT I THINK OF YOUR *IDIOTIC* PUPPETS! WATCH ME, FRITZ, *WATCH WHILE I BREAK IT INTO A THOUSAND PIECES!*

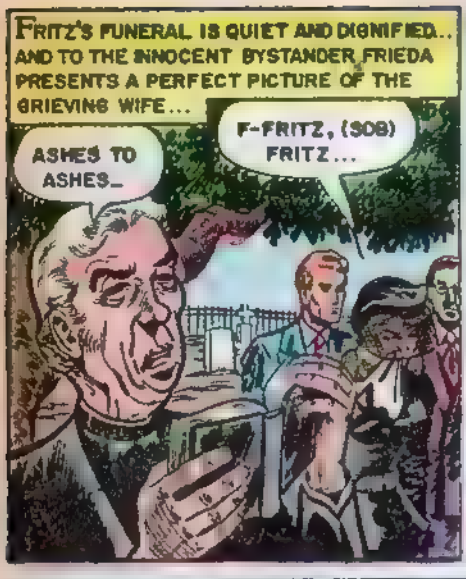
*NO* (GASP) *NO...*

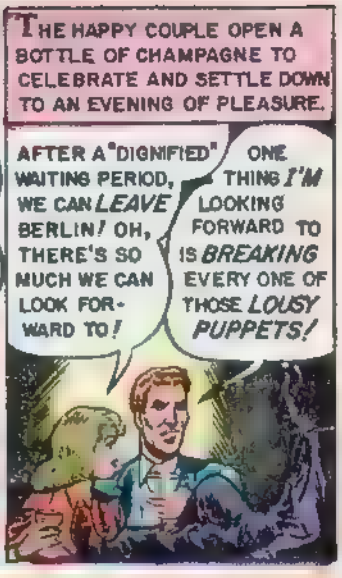
THE LAST THING FRITZ SAW BEFORE HE DIED IS JOCKO HIS FAVORITE PUPPET SMASHING AGAINST THE FLOOR. . .AS DEATH BRINGS THE NIGHTMARE TO A CLOSE HE HEARS FRIEDA LAUGHING, SNEERING AT HIM.

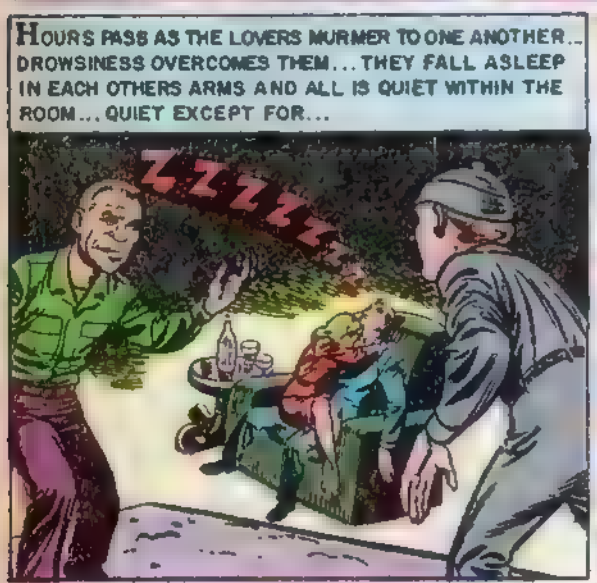
*DIE, FRITZ! DIE!*

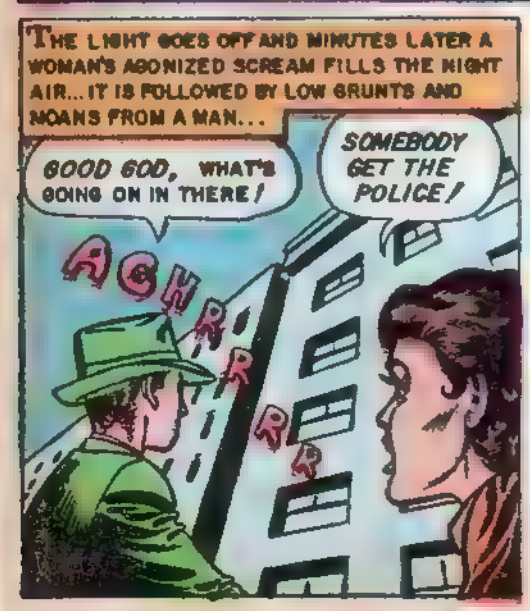
UGHHH... (GASP) AGHRRRR...

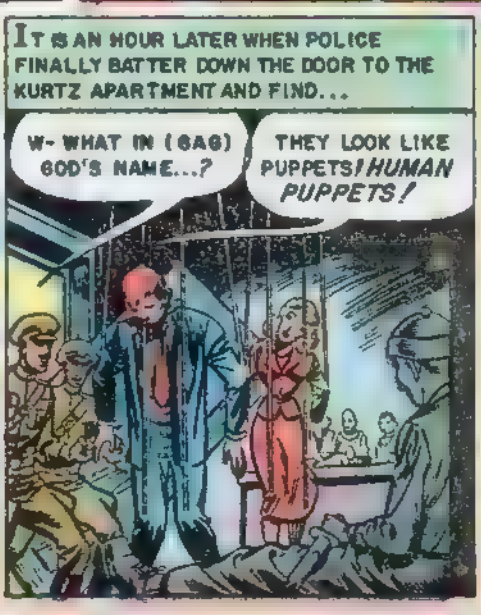
CRASH







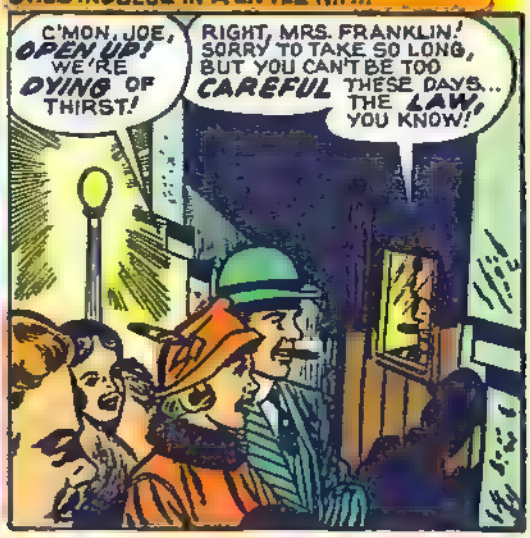

TCH...TCH.. TCH, THE POLICE WERE UTTERLY BEWILDERED, AND WHY NOT? HOW CAN YOU EXPLAIN WOODEN PUPPETS WITH DRIED BLOOD ON THEIR HANDS...AND KNIVES CLUTCHED BETWEEN THEIR INANIMATE FINGERS? HMMMNNNN?

THE END

SO YOU JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH **GORE**, EH, KIDDIES? NOT ENOUGH **TERROR**, NOT ENOUGH **HORROR**? WELL, HERE'S A **REPULSIVE** LITTLE GEM THAT SHOULD KEEP EVEN **YOU** SATIATED! IT'S A **DRUNKEN** DRAMA WE CALL..

# BOTTOMS UP

THE YEAR IS 1929 AND ALTHOUGH THE 18TH AMMENDMENT HAS PROCLAIMED PROHIBITION, THE MAJORITY OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS STILL INDULGE IN A LITTLE NIP...




INSIDE JOE'S SPEAKEASY THE BATHTUB GIN FLOWS LIKE WATER! LOU HENDRICKS, THE BARTENDER IS KNOWN ALL OVER NEW YORK FOR HIS "SPECIAL" CONCOCTION: GIN AND VODKA WITH JUST A TOUCH OF BITTERS...

LOU HENDRICKS WAS BORN FOR HIS JOB-THERE'S NOTHING LOU LIKES BETTER THAN A DRINK! HE'D RATHER DRINK THAN EAT!..
HEY, LIQUOR-HEAD, THAT STUFF IS FOR THE CUSTOMERS...NOT YOU!
OKAY, HONEY, OKAY! IT'S JUST A LITTLE ONE!
NORA, THE WAITRESS AT JOE'S SPEAKEASY IS LOU'S WIFE. NORA IS A WORRIER, AND ONE OF THE THINGS SHE WORRIES ABOUT IS LOU'S DRINKING...
PLEASE, LOU, DON'T DRINK ANYMORE TONIGHT! YOU KNOW WHAT JOE SAID LAST TIME YOU GOT DRUNK!
FOR PETE SAKE, STOP NAGGING ME, NORA! I CAN HOLD MY LIQUOR!
THE HENDRICKS HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR THREE YEARS AND HAVE A SON TWO-YEARS-OLD! OCCASIONALLY, AGAINST NORA'S WILL, LOU BRINGS BOBBIE TO THE SPEAKEASY...
HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE, BOBBIE!
HE OUGHT TO HAVE A DRINK, LOU!
THAT'S RIGHT, HAVE A BEER, KID
BOBBIE, COME HERE THIS INSTANT! OH, LOU, HOW CAN YOU DO THIS TO YOUR SON!
YEAH, I GUESS SHE'S RIGHT! THIS AIN'T NO PLACE FOR A KID!
THE BOYS WERE JUST TEASING, THEY DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING!
POOR NORA, SHE HAS HER PROBLEMS! DESPITE ALL HER PLEAS, LOU REFUSES TO CUT DOWN ON HIS DRINKING! IT IS ON NEW YEARS EVE THAT REAL TROUBLE DEVELOPES...
LOU, WHAT IN GOD'S NAME ARE YOU DOING BACK THERE? I'VE GOT THREE... DRINKING! YOU'RE DRINKING AGAIN!
HAPPY NY
RELAX, JOE, THEY'LL WAIT!
BUT ON THIS, THE BUSIEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR, JOE IS IN NO MOOD FOR LOU'S USUAL TRICKS...
LISTEN, YOU DRUNKEN SOT, I'M WARNING YOU... ONE MORE DRINK AND YOU'RE FIRED!
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME! NOBODY PUSHES LOU HENDRICKS AROUND!
THAT OUGHTA SHOW YOU, WISE GUY!
CRACCK
UGHHH!
LOU! NO, NO!

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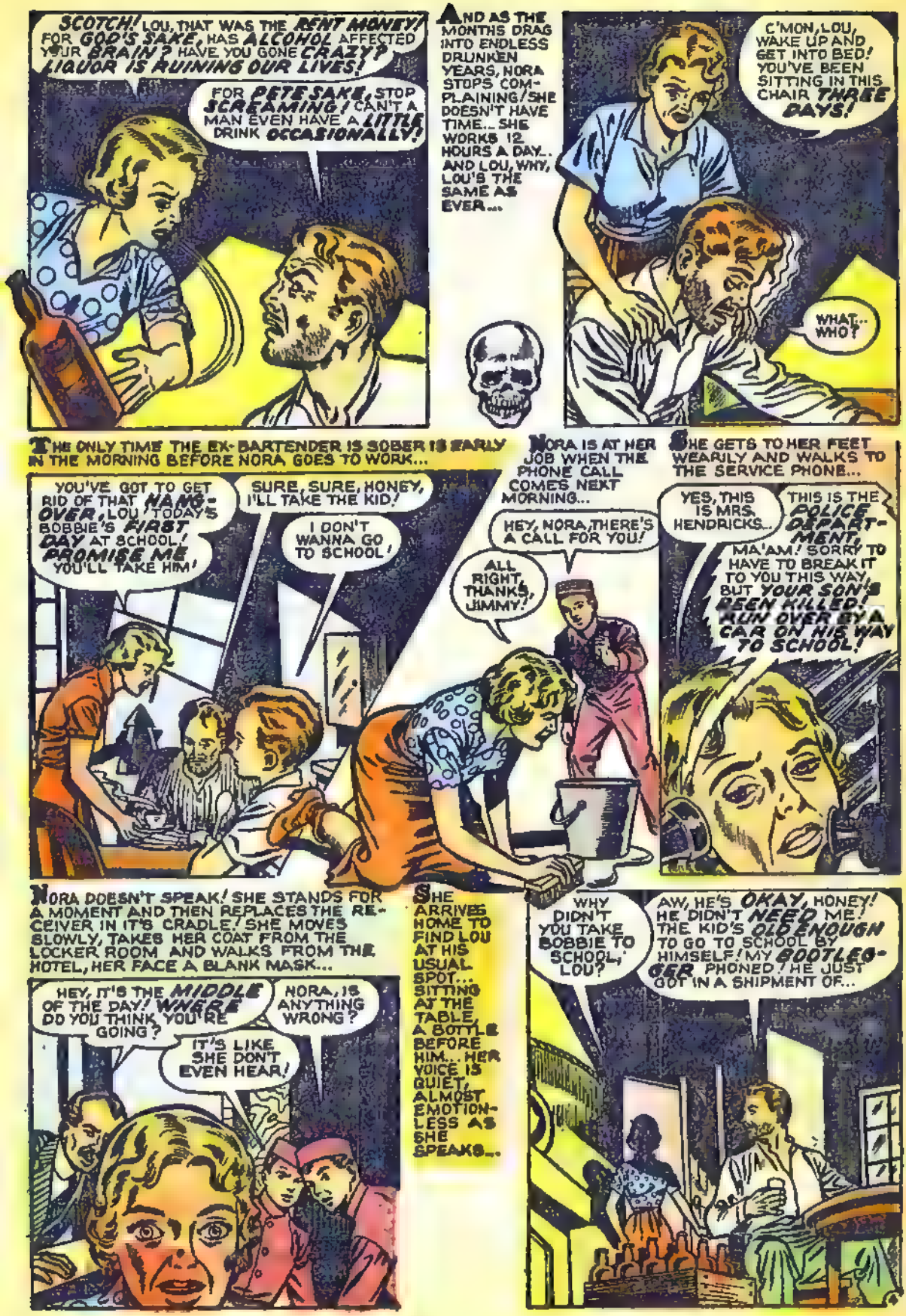

SCOTCH! LOU, THAT WAS THE RENT MONEY! FOR GOD'S SAKE, HAS ALCOHOL AFFECTED YOUR BRAIN? HAVE YOU GONE CRAZY? LIQUOR IS RUINING OUR LIVES!
FOR PETE SAKE, STOP SCREAMING! CAN'T A MAN EVEN HAVE A LITTLE DRINK OCCASIONALLY!
AND AS THE MONTHS DRAG INTO ENDLESS DRUNKEN YEARS, NORA STOPS COMPLAINING/SHE DOESN'T HAVE TIME... SHE WORKS 12 HOURS A DAY.. AND LOU, WHY, LOU'S THE SAME AS EVER...
C'MON, LOU, WAKE UP AND GET INTO BED! YOU'VE BEEN SITTING IN THIS CHAIR THREE DAYS!
WHAT... WHO?
THE ONLY TIME THE EX-BARTENDER IS SOBER IS EARLY IN THE MORNING BEFORE NORA GOES TO WORK...
YOU'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THAT HANG-OVER, LOU! TODAY'S BOBBIE'S FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL! PROMISE ME YOU'LL TAKE HIM!
SURE, SURE, HONEY, I'LL TAKE THE KID!
I DON'T WANNA GO TO SCHOOL!
NORA IS AT HER JOB WHEN THE PHONE CALL COMES NEXT MORNING...
HEY, NORA, THERE'S A CALL FOR YOU!
ALL RIGHT, THANKS, JIMMY!
SHE GETS TO HER FEET WEARILY AND WALKS TO THE SERVICE PHONE...
YES, THIS IS MRS. HENDRICKS...
THIS IS THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, MA'AM! SORRY TO HAVE TO BREAK IT TO YOU THIS WAY, BUT YOUR SON'S BEEN KILLED! RUN OVER BY A CAR ON HIS WAY TO SCHOOL!
NORA DOESN'T SPEAK! SHE STANDS FOR A MOMENT AND THEN REPLACES THE RECEIVER IN IT'S CRADLE! SHE MOVES SLOWLY, TAKES HER COAT FROM THE LOCKER ROOM AND WALKS FROM THE HOTEL, HER FACE A BLANK MASK...
HEY, IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
NORA, IS ANYTHING WRONG?
IT'S LIKE SHE DON'T EVEN HEAR!
SHE ARRIVES HOME TO FIND LOU AT HIS USUAL SPOT... SITTING AT THE TABLE, A BOTTLE BEFORE HIM... HER VOICE IS QUIET, ALMOST EMOTIONLESS AS SHE SPEAKS...
WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE BOBBIE TO SCHOOL, LOU?
AW, HE'S OKAY, HONEY! HE DIDN'T NEED ME! THE KID'S OLD ENOUGH TO GO TO SCHOOL BY HIMSELF! MY BOOTLEGGER PHONED! HE JUST GOT IN A SHIPMENT OF...

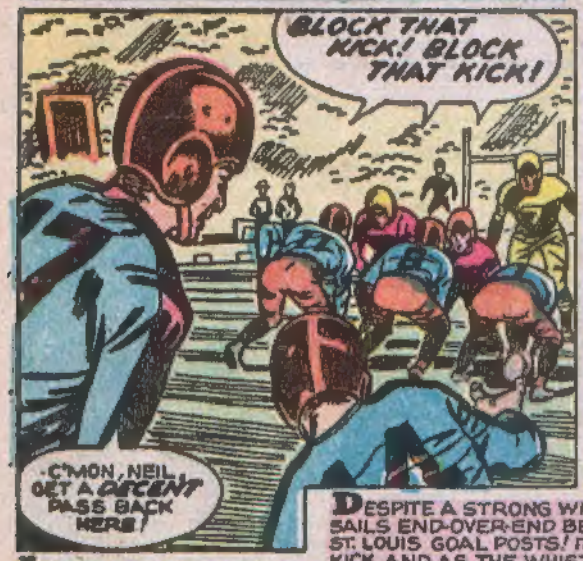
BUT SHE DOESN'T LISTEN TO THE REMAINDER OF WHAT HE HAS TO SAY... INSTEAD, SHE TAKES OFF HER COAT AND WALKS INTO THE KITCHEN, STOPPING AT THE CLOSET...
HE KILLED HIM... KILLED BOBBIE!
IT WAS (HIC) TOO GOOD A' BARGAIN TO PASS UP! A WHOLE CASE OF RYE FOR ONLY...
LOU MUMBLES ON DRUNKENLY, NOT SEEING NORA APPROACH FROM THE REAR...
YESSIR, IT'S SCHWELL STUFF! THE BEST! YOU OUGHTA TRY SOME, HONEY!
MURDER-ER! DIRTY DRUNKEN MURDER-ER! YOU KILLED HIM, LOU... KILL-ED OUR SON!
BUT IT'S ALL OVER NOW! I'M GOING TO KILL YOU! I'M GOING TO CRACK THAT DUMB LIQUOR-SOAKED SKULL INTO A THOUSAND PIECES!
IT'D DO YOU GOOD, NORA, A LITTLE DRINK'D DO YOU GOOD!
ALL THE FURY AND DISGUST AND HATRED OF YEARS ARE BEHIND THE AXE AS NORA BRINGS IT SLASHING THROUGH THE AIR...
YAAHHHH!
AND NOW THE SILENCE OF THE HENDRICKS APARTMENT IS BROKEN ONLY BY THE SOFT HUMMING OF NORA AS SHE BUSIES HERSELF WITH HER "WORK".
FRANK WESLAKE IS LOU'S BOOTLEGGER AND WHEN, AN HOUR LATER, NORA APPEARS AT HIS DOOR, HE'S NOT SURPRISED! AFTER ALL, DOUSN'T A GOOD WIFE BUY HER HUSBANDS LIQUOR?
DON'T TELL ME THAT HUSBAND OF YOURS HAS FINISHED HIS CASE ALREADY?
NO, THAT'S WHY I'M HERE! I'D LIKE TO RETURN IT... I NEED THE MONEY, FRANK... FOR A FUNERAL... A DOUBLE FUNERAL!
THE LOOK ON NORA'S FACE ALLOWS NO ROOM FOR QUESTIONS AND WESTLAKE TAKES THE CASE BACK, DEDUCTING MONEY FOR THE ONE BOTTLE LOU DRANK! NORA LEAVES AND THE BOOT-LEGGER LOOKS AFTER HER SPECULATIVELY...
HMMN, FUNNY! I FIGURED THAT RYE WOULD BE INSIDE LOU BY NOW!
BUT IF WESTLAKE WERE TO EXAMINE THE REMAINDER OF THE CASE MORE CLOSELY HE'D SEE THAT IT IS LOU WHO IS INSIDE THE LIQUOR! HEH... HEH... HEH! SLEEP WELL, KIDDIES!
THE END!

HEH...HEH...HEH... GREETINGS, FIENDS! THIS IS YOUR FRIEND, THE COFFIN-KEEPER, ALL READY TO CHILL YOUR BLOOD WITH ANOTHER LOATHSOME TALE OF HORROR! GRAB YOUR PUTRID DROOL BIBS AND PREPARE TO ENJOY YOURSELVES AS YOU READ...
SKIN 'EM ALIVE!
NAUSEATING NOVELS
IT IS A TENSE MOMENT AT BUSCH STADIUM. THE SCORE IN THIS, THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME, BETWEEN THE CHICAGO BLUE DEVILS AND THE ST. LOUIS TIGERS IS TIED AT 20-20! CHICAGO HAS JUST SCORED AND NOW, WHILE THOUSANDS WAIT BREATHLESSLY, THE BLUE DEVILS WILL TRY FOR THE EXTRA POINT...
GET IN THERE, TAD BOY! IT'S NOW OR NEVER!
BLUE DEVILS
50
THE CHICAGO FANS SCREAM THEIR DELIGHT AS TAD REYNOLDS EX-ALL AMERICAN FROM CALIFORNIA PREPARES TO ENTER THE GAME! REYNOLDS HASN'T MISSED AN EXTRA POINT IN THREE YEARS OF PRO BALL...
IT'S IN THE BAG, FRED! THERE GOES REYNOLDS!

REYNOLDS MOVES SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY/ THE TENSION AND EXCITEMENT DOESN'T BOTHER HIM! HE'S BEEN IN CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS BEFORE... AND NEVER MISSED!

THE KICKER'S "GOOD LUCK" BALL IS TOSSED TO THE UMPIRES, WHO NOD AND TOSS IT TO CHICAGO'S CENTER / BERNIE YOUNG, COACH FOR FOR ST. LOUIS, MOANS AND HOLDS HIS HEAD IN ANGUISH...

THE DRUMS FROM THE CHICAGO BAND ROLL AS THE TWO TEAMS LINE UP FOR THE KICK... AND FROM THE ST. LOUIS SIDE OF THE STADIUM ONE MIGHTY YELL SWELLS OVER THE FIELD..

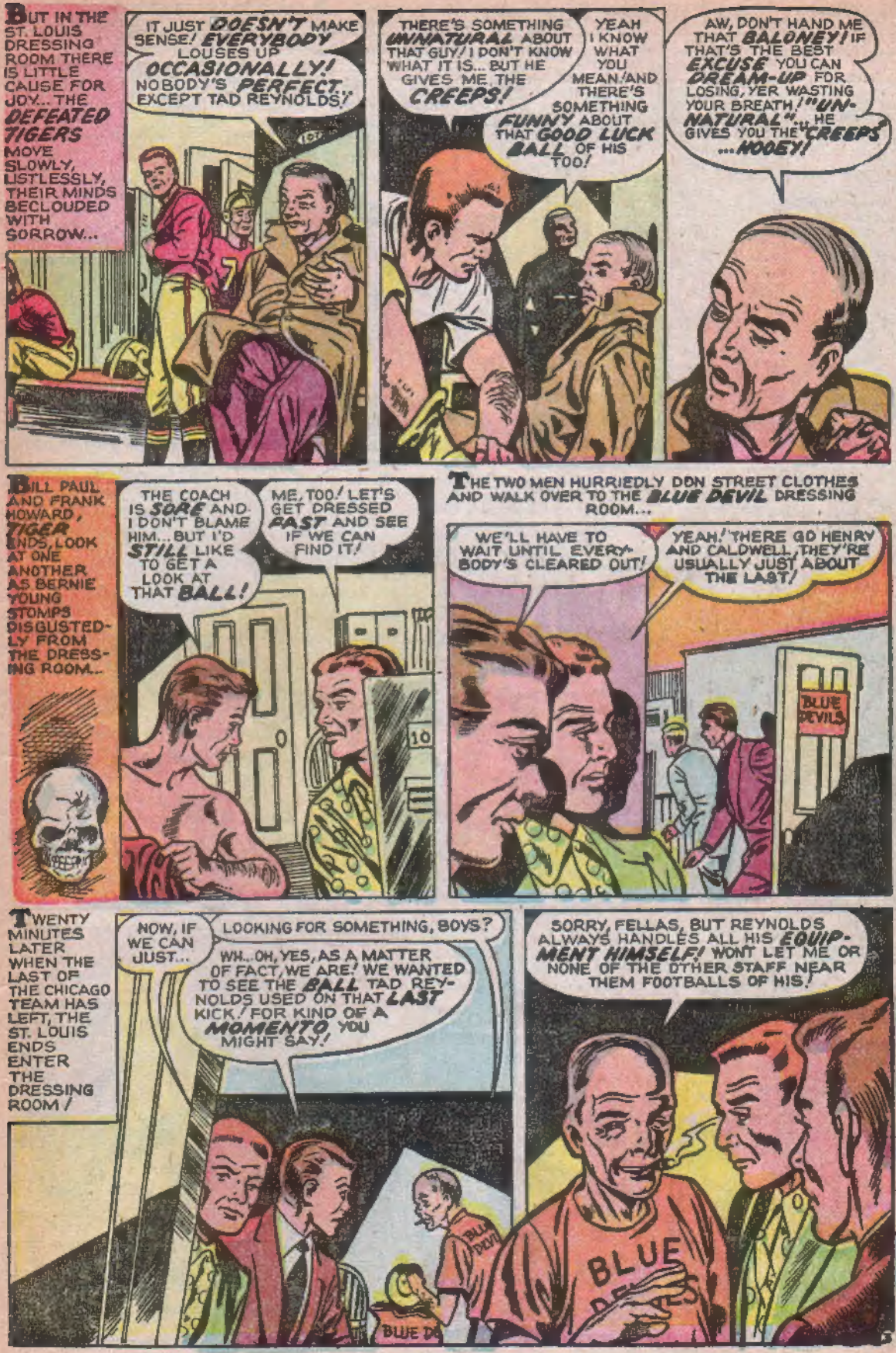



AND THEN SUDDENLY THERE IS SILENCE AS 40,000 SPECTATORS WATCH BREATHLESSLY AS HARVEY NEIL, BLUE DEVIL CENTER, FLIPS THE BALL TO TONY LATHEM WHO WILL HOLD...

LATHEM HOLDS AND THE FAMOUS REYNOLDS TOE CONNECTS SOLIDLY WITH THE OVAL BALL...

DESPITE A STRONG WIND, THE BALL SAILS END-OVER-END BETWEEN THE ST. LOUIS GOAL POSTS! IT'S A PERFECT KICK AND AS THE WHISTLE SOUNDS ENDING THE GAME, THE BLUE DEVILS WIN, 21-20!

DOWN ON THE PLAYING FIELD THE CHICAGO TEAM CONVERGES ON TAD REYNOLDS AND LIFTS THE MIGHTY HERO TO THEIR SHOULDERS! TO HIM THEY OWE THE CHAMPIONSHIP...


BUT IN THE ST. LOUIS DRESSING ROOM THERE IS LITTLE CAUSE FOR JOY... THE DEFEATED TIGERS MOVE SLOWLY, LISTLESSLY, THEIR MINDS BECLOUDED WITH SORROW...
IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! EVERYBODY LOUSES UP OCCASIONALLY! NOBODY'S PERFECT, EXCEPT TAD REYNOLDS!
THERE'S SOMETHING UNNATURAL ABOUT THAT GUY! I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS... BUT HE GIVES ME THE CREEPS!
YEAH I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN! AND THERE'S SOMETHING FUNNY ABOUT THAT GOOD LUCK BALL OF HIS TOO!
AW, DON'T HAND ME THAT BALONEY! IF THAT'S THE BEST EXCUSE YOU CAN DREAM-UP FOR LOSING, YER WASTING YOUR BREATH! "UNNATURAL"... HE GIVES YOU THE "CREEPS" ...MOOEY!
BILL PAUL AND FRANK HOWARD, TIGER ENDS, LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER AS BERNIE YOUNG STOMPS DISGUSTEDLY FROM THE DRESSING ROOM...
THE COACH IS SORE AND I DON'T BLAME HIM... BUT I'D STILL LIKE TO GET A LOOK AT THAT BALL!
ME, TOO! LET'S GET DRESSED FAST AND SEE IF WE CAN FIND IT!
THE TWO MEN HURRIEDLY DON STREET CLOTHES AND WALK OVER TO THE BLUE DEVIL DRESSING ROOM...
WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL EVERYBODY'S CLEARED OUT!
YEAH! THERE GO HENRY AND CALDWELL, THEY'RE USUALLY JUST ABOUT THE LAST!
BLUE DEVILS
TWENTY MINUTES LATER WHEN THE LAST OF THE CHICAGO TEAM HAS LEFT, THE ST. LOUIS ENDS ENTER THE DRESSING ROOM /
NOW, IF WE CAN JUST...
LOOKING FOR SOMETHING, BOYS?
WH...OH, YES, AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE ARE! WE WANTED TO SEE THE BALL TAD REYNOLDS USED ON THAT LAST KICK! FOR KIND OF A MOMENTO YOU MIGHT SAY!
SORRY, FELLAS, BUT REYNOLDS ALWAYS HANDLES ALL HIS EQUIPMENT HIMSELF! WON'T LET ME OR NONE OF THE OTHER STAFF NEAR THEM FOOTBALLS OF HIS!
BLUE

BUT INSTEAD OF GIVING UP, FRANK HOWARD AND BILL PAUL ARE MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER! AFTER A HASTY DINNER THEY DECIDE UPON A PLAN...

BOY, REYNOLDS SURE LIVES IN THE *MIDDLE OF NOWHERE*, DOESN'T HE?

YEAH, BUT AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED, THAT'S *GOOD!* THERE'S JUST THAT ONE LIGHT ON IN THE BASEMENT... LET'S SNEAK OVER AND TAKE A LOOK!

THEY MAKE THEIR WAY STEALTHILY ACROSS THE DESERTED STREET AND PEER INTO THE BASEMENT ROOM...

FOR *CRIPES SAKE!* LOOK AT THAT *STUFF!*

I DON'T *GET* IT! WHAT'S THAT *TABLE...* AND ALL THOSE *NEEDLES* AND *KNIVES!?*

ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY BOTH MEN FEEL A SLOW CHILL STEAL DOWN THEIR SPINES AND WITH A SINGLE INTENT, THEY TURN TO FLEE...

C'MON, FRANK LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

YEAH, I...

SORRY, BOYS BUT YOU'RE *NOT* GOING *ANYWHERE!* MAKE ONE *WRONG* MOVE AND I'LL PUT A *BULLET* THROUGH YOUR HEADS!

REYNOLDS LEADS THE TWO TERROR-STRICKEN MEN DOWN INTO THE BASEMENT ROOM AND THEN LAUGHS JEERINGLY AT THEM!

OLD HARRY CALLED AND TOLD ME TWO GUYS WERE INTERESTED IN MY FOOTBALL! I KIND OF THOUGHT YOU MIGHT DROP AROUND... SO I'VE BEEN *WAITING* FOR YOU! GO AHEAD, *HOT SHOTS... LOOK TO YOUR HEARTS CONTENT!*

W-WE DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING, TAD! JUST... JUST THOUGHT MAYBE... MAYBE

YOU THOUGHT MAYBE SOMETHING WAS FUNNY ABOUT THE BALL! WELL, YOU WERE RIGHT, HOWARD... *VERY RIGHT!* FEEL IT... GO AHEAD! *SOFT*, ISN'T IT! *REAL SOFT!*

YEAH... IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE... LIKE...

*LIKE HUMAN SKIN! GO AHEAD, SAY IT... HUMAN SKIN!* NOTHING BETTER FOR KICKING!... *PIGSKIN* IS ALL RIGHT, BUT TAKE IT FROM ME, *HUMAN SKIN'S THE BEST!*

NO, NO...!

AND NOW FRANK AND BILL KNOW THE MEANING OF THE OPERATING TABLE AND THE LONG KNIVES AND NEEDLES... POOR LADS, TCH, TCH, TCH, YOU MIGHT SAY THE WERE ALL *WRAPPED UP* IN THEIR FAVORITE SPORT, *FOOTBALL!*

I'M GLAD THE BOYS STOPPED BY... MY OLD BALLS WERE GETTING A *LITTLE* WORN OUT!

AND WHEN THE BLUE DEVILS PLAYED THEIR FIRST GAME NEXT SEASON I DOUBT THAT ANYONE NOTICED THE SMALL TATTOO ON THE FOOTBALL... THE SMALL TATTOO WITH THE INITIALS F.H....

*HURRAH FOR REYNOLDS!*

*LOOK AT THAT BALL GO!*

F. H.

THE END